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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Middle East - Iraq - Syria

GWOT

PARIS - Tuesday, October 25, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Middle East - Iraq - Syria

GWOT

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic social, political and economic news dominate today's front pages, except for Les Echos which devotes its lead and editorial to the nomination of Ben Bernanke to replace Greenspan "the Magician." According to Les Echos, financial markets "are reassured by President Bush's choice." In his editorial Jean-Marc Vittori comments on Bernanke's pet peeve: deflation: "Bernanke is a moderate Republican and a fervent economist. In an economy marked by growth but undermined by debts, Bernanke will probably try to navigate between the pitfalls of inflation and deflation. Something that may appear paradoxical, considering that America's inflation is at its highest. Welcome to the monetary policy of the 21st century."

The other exception in today's reporting is Catholic La Croix which devotes its lead, "France Re-Enforces its Anti-Terrorist Arsenal," editorial and several articles to the fight against terrorism, as France's government begins to debate new anti-terrorism measures. Liberation reports on the confessions of repenting Jemaah Islamiya leader Nasir Abas, who "reveals" the inner workings of the Indonesian Islamic group. (See Part C)

Le Figaro devotes a full page to Iraq's Sunni insurrection and another to Syria's regime "under pressure at the UN." (See Part C)

The front-page of Le Parisien headlines: "State of Emergency in Florida" and quotes Governor Jeb Bush saying that the "risks are even higher after the storm than during the storm." According to France Soir: "The American authorities seem not to know how to react anymore faced with the threat of a hurricane." France Soir's Jean-marc Tanguy writes: "Friday, the American Ambassador in France Craig Stapleton thanked the French divers in the name of the population of Louisiana. Overcome by this show of appreciation, the divers who belong to the French 'marine nationale.'" described the warm welcome that they got in Louisiana."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Middle East - Iraq - Syria

"Syrian Regime Under Pressure at UN"

Alain Barluet in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/25):

"Negotiations are underway at the UN about a resolution that will be Syria's last chance to cooperate in the investigation into Hariri's assassination. The notion of 'targeted sanctions' is a possibility. France is eager to 'take the time necessary for a resolution that pleases everyone.' But on the American side, the time has come to be firm. The alchemy of a consensus, which seemed to have worked until now may be more difficult to sustain. as the U.S. and the British call for an 'urgent and strong reaction.'"

"The Sunni Insurrection Toughening in Iraq"

Georges Malbrunot in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/25): "The tactical alliance between Islamic radicals of al-Zarqawi and former Baathists who remain faithful to Saddam Hussein is re-enforcing Iraq's Sunni rebellion. While foreigners are often behind suicide car bombings, which target Iraqi civilians, former Iraqi soldiers target American convoys. The first consequence of this joint approach is a 'professionalization' of the guerrilla war. The Americans are convinced that despite their differences, a tactical alliance was sealed between the two groups after the battle of Falluja in 2004."

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"Democratic Prevention"

Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix (10/25): "Terrorism forces nations which have been targeted to defend themselves

in such a way that the guarantees provided by the right of law are sometimes mistreated. At times certain categories of individuals suffer because of their religion or the color of their skin. Great Britain, the great champion of Habeas Corpus is thus undermining its sacrosanct principles with this new obligation to carry a national identity card. France's new anti-terrorist measures should re-enforce the existing legal system but remain within the boundaries of civil liberties. The aim is to prevent possible attacks through the monitoring of Islamic networks and their telecommunications. To advertise this also serves as a deterrent. France remains a target of terrorism. It appears to have thwarted several attempts through its specialized intelligence services. Still, complete security is impossible because networks are volatile, suicide bombers are determined and manufacturing a deadly device requires feeble means. This legislation will be up for revision after three years. To fight terrorism without the use of terrorist methods."

"Confession"

Patrick Sabatier in left-of-center Liberation (10/25): "The confessions of Nasir Abas of Jemaah Islamiya is a first, at least in France. This former repented Islamic leader is probably not telling all. But it is clear that Islamic terrorism has roots that go far beyond Europe. This confession helps to better understand the threat that weighs in on all countries where youth are being manipulated in the name of an ideology of terror. International terrorism finds its recruits wherever there is injustice and wherever religion is used to fuel conflicts. The desire for vengeance is used by preachers who feed feelings of hate all the more easily because they do their preaching behind the closed doors of religious schools. Here they instill the feeling that all the suffering of the Muslim world is caused by the West and that the remedy lies in Jihad. The weapons of massive terror are manufactured in training camps established in geographical zones of political anarchy. Bin Laden no longer has an active role: he has simply provided the model. Democracies must destroy these workshops and think about ways to defuse them." STAPLETON